

## **BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

On May 29, 2025, during a special meeting of the Arkansas State Board of Education, pursuant to the legal authority and jurisdiction vested in the Board by the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act (AESAA), Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2901 et seq., and the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act, the Board considered whether to classify the Blytheville School District as in need of Level 5 - Intensive support.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. On May 14, 2025, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education provided ~~written notification to the~~ Blytheville School District that the division would be recommending that the Blytheville School District be classified as being in need of Level 5 - Intensive Support and that the division would be presenting this recommendation to the State Board at its May 29, 2025 meeting.
2. The district appealed the division's recommendation on May 21, 2025.
3. A hearing to consider the district's appeal was held in the May 29, 2025 meeting during ~~which evidence and argument~~ was offered by division staff, as well as by the Blytheville School Board of Directors president Desmond Hammett, the Blytheville School District interim superintendent Jennifer Blankenship, and others from the school district.
4. The evidence reflected ~~that that a prolonged delay in the hiring of a fully qualified~~ superintendent has created absence in coherent leadership; the practices of the Blytheville School Board has led to inconsistent governance structures; the district has experienced a sustained pattern of student underachievement; and the district has suffered sustained patterns of declining student enrollment.



### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

5. Upon consideration of the evidence and argument presented, the State Board denies the appeal of the Blytheville School District.

6. Upon consideration of the evidence and argument presented, the State Board classifies the Blytheville School District as being in need of Level 5 - Intensive Support.

7. Pursuant to its authority under the AESAA and rules governing the Act, the State Board Orders that effective May 29, 2025:

a) The Blytheville School District is classified as in need of Level 5 - Intensive support;

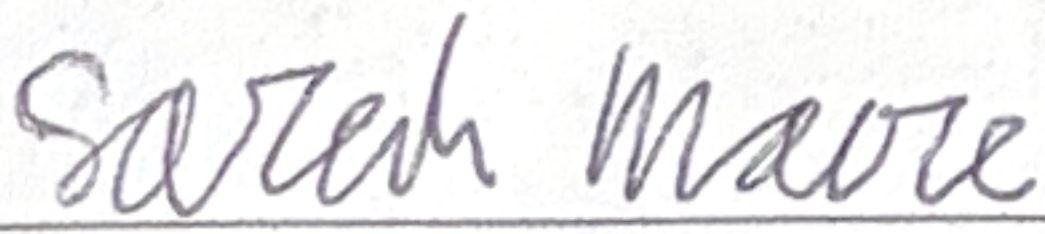
b) The Blytheville School District Board of Directors is permanently removed;

c) The Commissioner of Education shall assume all authority of the Blytheville School District Board of Directors including but not limited to the authority to designate a superintendent or interim superintendent; and

d) The Commissioner of Education shall conduct an analysis of all school district systems and make recommendations for additional action by the State Board including exploring the possibility of a school transformation contract.

**IT IS SO ORDERED**

Signed this 5<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025.

  
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Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair  
Arkansas State Board of Education